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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

6 March 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: The NRO

The purpose of this memorandum is to identify the basic aspects of the present National Reconnaissance Program that require modification to bring about harmonious cooperation and the establishment of a successful National Reconnaissance Program.

1. On the assumption that the National interest can only be served by ensuring effective participation of both DOD and CIA in the National Reconnaissance Program, it is now clear that adjustments are needed in the original NRO agreement of 13 March 1963.

2. The chart prepared by the DNRO to explain the operation of the NRO reflects the confusion which has developed over the relative responsibilities of CIA and its subordinate elements on the one hand and the DNRO on the other. Fundamentally, it is not an accurate description of the present situation. The chart fails to recognize important programs⁽¹⁾ and elements⁽²⁾ of the National Reconnaissance effort. It distorts the relationship between CIA and the NRO by substituting a command relationship with Colonel Ledford and his immediate programs for the coordinating responsibility contemplated at the time of the agreement. To understand the NRO problem, it is first necessary to include all of the programs and participating elements of CIA, to recognize their command relationships and to be clear about the functional relationships implied by CIA-Air Force collaboration in important areas. All of the elements of the NRP of which we are aware are reflected in the first chart prepared by CIA.

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(1)

SAC U-2's, R-71, TAGEBOARD, etc.

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(2) Program C, D, and various CIA elements.

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The combination of those elements to carry out satellite or manned aircraft reconnaissance missions is shown by the overlays.

3. The problem created by the relationship between the DMRO and operational elements of CIA cannot be resolved by boxes or colors. It requires definition. The agreement of 13 March 1963 recognized the problem and tried to solve it by establishing a Deputy Director, MRO who would come from CIA and through whom guidance and instructions to subordinate echelons of CIA would be transmitted. This arrangement was designed to insulate the operating levels of CIA from direct supervision by an official of an outside agency and to encourage effective participation by CIA in the MRP. In practice it has not proved effective.

4. A second simpler chart suggests an organizational arrangement which is compatible with the objective of ensuring coordinated supervision of the National Reconnaissance Program but which also preserves the integrity of command lines and managerial responsibility.

5. The principal features of this organizational arrangement are:

a. Provision for intelligence guidance to the component responsible for launching, inflight control and recovery of space vehicles through a satellite operations center located in CIA which is responsive to the DCI and WSIB.

b. Establishment of a center under the appropriate component of the Defense establishment which will have the responsibility for launching, inflight control and recovery of space reconnaissance vehicles.

25X1A

-2-

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c. Confirmation of the existing Executive Committee to consist of the DCI and the Deputy Secretary of Defense which will be responsible for policy guidance and the allocation of program responsibilities, including research and development projects, to CIA and/or appropriate components of the Defense establishment.

d. Recognition of the Director, NRO as the over-all coordinator of the reconnaissance program within the over-all policy guidance and allocation of responsibility established by the Executive Committee. In the transmission of guidance, instructions or requests for action the DNRO will deal through the head of the Central Intelligence Agency. CIA will keep the DNRO fully informed on all operations and projects which CIA is conducting as part of the reconnaissance program. The DNRO will keep CIA fully informed on all operations or projects which the DOD is conducting as part of the WRP.

e. CIA's responsibility for research and development of payloads will continue into the production phase of the payload and will include the right to adequate representation in the assembly of the payload into the ultimate launch vehicle, and its operation on orbit.

6. If the foregoing principles are accepted, the agreement of 13 March 1963 should be reviewed and amended as necessary to give them adequate recognition.

25X1A

-3-

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